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ABSTRACT

This booklet contains the Quality Standards for Noncredit Continuing Education Programs developed by a task force sponsored by the Ohio Board of Regents. The task force included continuing educators from Ohio's colleges and universities as well as educators from related areas, including vocational education and private industry. (These standards were endorsed by the Ohio Board of Regents in 1984 as the nation's first statewide standards for noncredit continuing education.) The Standards for Noncredit Programs were developed to serve the following purposes: (1) to provide institutions with a basis for self-study and assessment; (2) to enable collegiate continuing education organizations to identify themselves as having met professionally accepted standards; (3) to serve as a foundation for the continuing development of noncredit program standards and processes for quality assurance; and (4) to provide criteria by which the public can identify quality noncredit programs. The standards are presented in two parts. In Part I, seven categories of standards are defined. These standards cover mission (goals, objectives, functions), organization/administration/personnel, instructional personnel, resources and facilities, educational offerings, recruitment/admissions/student services, and program evaluation. In Part II, questions for self-study are presented in each of the seven categories. (These questions are not meant to be exhaustive; rather, they are intended to amplify and stimulate the self-study process.) (KC)

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Quality Assurance in Noncredit Continuing Education

The Quality Standards for Noncredit Continuing Education Programs were developed by a Task Force sponsored by the Ohio Board of Regents. The Task Force included continuing educators from Ohio's colleges and universities as well as educators from related areas, including vocational education and private industry.

The Standards were endorsed by the Ohio Board of Regents on December 21, 1984, as the nation's first statewide standards for noncredit continuing education. The Regents urged Ohio's colleges and universities to adopt the Standards, and they asked the Ohio Continuing Higher Education Association (OCHEA) to take responsibility for their implementation.

The OCHEA Executive Board formally accepted the Standards on behalf of the Association and assigned the task of implementation to the Organizational Development Committee.

This edition of the Standards is published by OCHEA for member institutions as part of OCHEA's goal of promoting and encouraging top quality continuing education programs.

March 1987

CE 046 480

INTRODUCTION

The Standards for Non-credit Programs were developed to serve the following purposes:

1. To provide institutions with a basis for self-study and assessment

2. To enable collegiate continuing education organizations to identify themselves as having met professionally accepted standards

3. To serve as a foundation for the continuing development of noncredit program standards and processes for quality assurance

4. To provide criteria by which the public can identify quality noncredit programs

In developing standards for noncredit programs, Ohio chose to measure achievement in terms of goals and objectives, with an emphasis on institutional self-study and assessment. These standards follow closely the model developed by the North Central Association. Colleges and universities should *adapt* these standards to their particular noncredit offerings. Quality control ultimately lies with continuing educators and their institutions.

The standards are presented in two parts. In **Part I,** seven categories of standards are defined. In **Part II,** questions for self-study are presented in each of the seven categories. These questions are not meant to be exhaustive; rather, they are intended to amplify and stimulate the self-study process.

PART I: STANDARDS FOR NONCREDIT CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

I. Mission (Goals, Objectives, Functions)

A. The educational mission of the sponsoring institution must be clearly stated, and the goals, objectives, and functions of continuing education must be consistent with that mission.

B. Continuing education *programs* must be consistent with the institution's educational functions, resources, and expertise.

II. Organization/Administration/Personnel

A. A recognizable organization, with clearly defined purposes, must be in operation to design, approve, administer, and assess continuing education programs.

B. Continuing education must be administered within the sponsoring institution to ensure that all programs are organized and coordinated in an effective manner.

III. Instructional Personnel

A. Continuing education faculty must be competent to carry out the level of instruction to which they are assigned and should possess academic preparation and/or expertise appropriate to the fields taught.

B. Specific criteria and a systematic process must be identified for the selection and evaluation of faculty for continuing education programs.

C. Skill in teaching adults, in addition to subject matter competence, must be required of noncredit faculty.

IV. Resources and Facilities

The institution must provide resources and facilities to enable continuing education to meet its goals and objectives.

V. Educational Offerings

A. Continuing education offerings must be organized learning experiences designed to meet specific learning objectives.

B. Continuing education offerings must specify the clientele, the competencies, the prerequisites, the content, and the instructional and evaluation strategies.

C. Course descriptions and syllabi must be on file and accessible by the public.

D. Students must have an opportunity to evaluate continuing education offerings, including an evaluation of goals, objectives, content, and instruction.

VI. Recruitment, Admissions, and Student Services

A. Continuing education promotional materials must be accurate and must provide students with specific information about the program, the topics, the benefits, and the completion requirements.

B. Institutional continuing education policies, including fee schedule, refund schedule, program cancellation, record maintenance, and student services must be readily available to students.

VII. Program Evaluation

A. Continuing education must engage in a continuous review of its organization, administration, and offerings through the interrelationships of the curricula, faculty, students, professional organizations, and other available resources.

B. The results of the evaluation must be used to modify and improve continuing education.

C. Continuing education must have plans for the long-range development of its organization and offerings; these plans must be a part of a design for total institutional development.

PART II: QUESTIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY

I. Mission (Goals, Objectives, Functions)

A. Are the goals, objectives, and functions of continuing education consistent with the mission of the institution?

B. Are the continuing education offerings appropriate to postsecondary education?

C. Are *program offerings* related to the goals, objectives, and functions of continuing education?

II. Organization/Administration/Personnel

A. Is continuing education organized in a clear, well-defined manner consistent with its stated goals, objectives, and functions?

B. Does the continuing education organization function as depicted in the organizational chart of the institution?

C. Is continuing education administered in an efficient and effective manner?

D. Does the continuing education staff possess the necessary professional competencies to carry out their assigned responsibilities?

E. Are continuing education policies clearly stated and communicated throughout the institution?

III. Instructional Personnel

A. Do specific written policies exist for the identification, selection, employment and evaluation of continuing education faculty?

B. Are specific personnel policies clearly stated and communicated to continuing education faculty?

C. Is there a reasonable relationship between the number and diversity of instructional offerings and the size and diversity of continuing education faculty?

IV. Resources and Facilities

A. Are appropriate and adequate administrative facilities and services available for continuing education?

B. Are appropriate and adequate instructional facilities and equipment, including laboratories, computers, and library facilities, available for continuing education offerings?

C. Are learning resources and support services, e.g., audio-visuals, available to continuing education faculty?

V. Educational Offerings

A. What rationale is used to determine what is to be offered?

B. Is there evidence of a systematic process for proposing, approving, and implementing continuing education offerings?

C. Is a syllabus developed for each continuing education offering?

D. Do offerings include statements of purpose and objectives?

E. Is a file maintained for each offering, including syllabus, handout materials, and instructor of record?

F. Is the content of each offering selected and organized in accordance with recognized principles of adult teaching and learning?

G. Is there evidence that offerings are pre-planned, including opportunities for input by faculty, continuing education personnel, and target clientele?

H. Are systematic methods used to measure student performance?

VI. Recruitment, Admissions, and Student Services

A. Is informational and promotional material about continuing education offerings accurate? Does it provide students with details about the nature of the offerings, the topics to be treated, the objectives to be achieved, and the necessary prerequisites?

B. Are written policies regarding fees, refunds, cancellations, CEU's, registration, certificates, and maintenance of records available to students?

C. Are attendance records maintained to verify student participation in continuing education offerings?

D. Are permanent student records maintained? Are student records available to students, employers, and others at the request of the student?

E. Are policies on the use of learning resources and availability of student services communicated to continuing education students?

F. Are continuing education staff available to provide information to students?

VII. Program Evaluation

A. Are systematic methods used to measure the effectiveness of continuing education in terms of its stated objectives?

B. Are evaluation results used to modify and improve continuing education offerings?

C. Are evaluation results used in the systematic refinement of the continuing education mission and operation?